

Remarks

Claims 1-24 and 26-32 are pending in the subject application. By this Amendment, Applicant has canceled claims 2 and 14 and has amended claims 1, 3, 15, and 16 to incorporate dependent claims and/or to correct claim dependency in view of the amendments. Support for the claim amendments can be found throughout the subject specification and in the claims as originally filed. Applicant respectfully submits that the amendments present herein will require no further search or examination on the part of the Examiner. Entry and consideration of the amendments presented herein is respectfully requested. Accordingly, claims 1, 3-13, 15-24, and 26-32 are currently before the Examiner. Favorable consideration of the pending claims is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-7, 10, 16, 26, 31, and 32 remain rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as obvious over Adams (U.S. Patent No. 6,540,781) in view of Thubrikar *et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 6,544,285). The Examiner asserts that it would have been obvious at the time of the present invention to prepare the vessel structure of the Adams patent from a synthetic material in order to arrive at the claimed invention. Applicant respectfully asserts that the cited references, taken alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest Applicant's claimed invention. However, by this Amendment, Applicant has amended claim 1 to incorporate the elements of dependent claims 2 and 14. The Examiner has acknowledged, in the Office Action dated December 13, 2007, the allowability of the subject matter of dependent claim 14 (which depends from claim 2). Thus, Applicant has limited claim 1 to that subject matter deemed allowable by the Examiner. These amendments have been made solely to expedite prosecution of the subject application to allowance. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 USC §103(a) is respectfully requested.

It should be understood that the amendments presented herein have been made solely to expedite prosecution of the subject application to completion and should not be construed as an indication of Applicant's agreement with or acquiescence in the Examiner's position.

In view of the foregoing remarks and amendments to the claims, Applicant believes that the currently pending claims are in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees under 37 CFR §§1.16 or 1.17 as required by this paper to Deposit Account No. 19-0065.

Applicant invites the Examiner to call the undersigned if clarification is needed on any of this response, or if the Examiner believes a telephonic interview would expedite the prosecution of the subject application to completion.

Respectfully submitted,



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DRP/mv
Attachment: Petition and Fee for Extension of Time